

Bric Grant Funding meeting for Meadow Road - Stow Town Office

10am zoom meeting, Thursday, 10/24/2024

Attending:

*Belle Stafford, Road Task Force (RTF)

*Carl Lindblade, Select person

*Nancy Boros, Treasurer

***Cassandra Susemihl**

Grants Specialist & Planner | Oxford County Emergency Management Agency

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Cassandra's role is to support towns applying for funding with the documentation and application process.

Summary of Issue to be resolved:

Meadow Road is a connector road between the east and west side of town. The flooding issue is a multi-town problem affecting Stow (Meadow Rd) Lovell (at Harbor Rd) and Fryeburg (at River Rd) as well. Emergency access is inhibited. It is a town road with a Me DOT bridge.

Stow abuts Evans Notch and the WMNF. Route 113 is closed in the winter. 1/3 Stow is in the WMNF. Stow is the first town to be flooded from the watershed that comes down from the mountains in the North, or the WMNF.

Meadow Road is below grade (we think by 5 feet) and floods out each major storm. The road crosses a wetland, and the road is not high enough above the wetland. Historically this was not a wetland, but a field that used to be hayed. Once the road was built, it acted as a dam and is now a wetland. There is a DOT bridge on Meadow Rd, and it has been reduced to a one lane bridge by the DOT due to its age and condition. It is on the schedule to be repaired by ME DOT, but we don't know when. It makes sense to dovetail the bridge work with this Meadow Lane road elevation. If we get this grant, Heather Dumais (or her replacement) will work with the ME DOT to have the road and bridge work align.

Emergency access – Meadow Rd is one of the main ways out of town. In a bad storm, if Meadow is flooded and 113 is blocked, there would be no way out or no way in for an emergency vehicle. North Chatham, a NH town, can only be accessed by driving through Stow.

2 Grants available:

BRIC – “Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities” - recommended to RTF by Heather Dumas

The Bric grant is funded by the Federal government and passed through to be administered by the state. It is nationally competitive, but the upside is there is a larger pool of funding.

HMGP Grants – Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (this falls under ‘406’ funding). Cassandra to send a brochure detailing the ‘404 vs 406’ funding. The advantage of an HMGP grant is that it uses ME State funding and is “in-state competitive only”. Deadlines roll, currently running between December ’24 and June 25. In short, HPMG funding becomes available to everyone in the state when there is a disaster event. Funding is possible whether or not the town had damage. Downside – there is less money for this grant, however there are currently 6 open funding opportunities.

NOTE: we are applying for mitigation funds for several of our roads through the current FEMA application. None of these mitigation funds include Meadow Road. This is considered the “406” portion of HM funding, and is tied to the two disaster events.

All Maine towns are eligible to apply for the “404” portion of HM funding within the context of each disaster event, but not TIED to the disaster event.

Our meeting focus was on the BRIC Grant.

We are applying for the “Project Scoping” aspect of the BRIC grant, which is strictly the project scoping costs (engineering). This part of the BRIC grant sets the stage for the rest of the road project work. We believe that once the project scoping aspect of the job is complete, we would then apply for the funds for the road work itself. This is called the “Full Application” and involves a bidding process using Maine state guidelines, and permitting etc...

Timeline of for the Bric grant, as we understand it (we have asked for clarification on this):

1. Scoping application – we reach out to an engineer to fill out the application and define what the project is. C. Fournier at HEB Engineers has stated he will do this for us.
2. MEMA determines if we get the money. Award decisions are made in August 2025
3. If we get the funding, we could start the actual design work for the Engineering plans as soon as Fall of 2025.
4. We believe we have 36 months to complete this portion of the project? (engineering plan or actual road work , still not clear)
5. We believe that after the engineering plan is complete, we must submit a full application for the next phase of funding that would cover the actual road work. We have been informed that includes the formal process of bidding and permitting – The State may have an EHP (EHP – Environmental and Historical) Dept to review the project.
6. Public hearings are required for this phase – selectboard must approve and it must be approved at town meeting. We are not sure what is required regarding public hearings for the scoping phase.

7. BRIC Grants are reimbursable grants. We submit for reimbursement for the project as the work progresses . We do not have to wait until the entire project is over. Cassandra stated the turnaround for reimbursement is fairly short, within a month, so this will have a minimal effect on our cash flow.

Status of BRIC Grant now:

The state has not announced the application window for this year's BRIC grants. It was supposed to be Oct-Nov (2 month window), but is being held up on the Federal level because FEMA funding depends on Congress. Other FEMA related funds are also on hold.

We will likely have to wait until after the election

We learned that the window for the application in previous years was 5 months (Oct – Feb).

We do not know how this delay will affect when the grants are awarded, or other parts of the timeline.

NB to do:

- Provide RTF with a list of grants awarded (and not awarded)
- Ask Select board if RTF can have a google suite gmail so we can share docs on google drive
- Create preliminary Time & Effort tracking spreadsheet

BS to do:

- Belle will coordinate with the RTF, Cassandra, Engineer and Selectboard to set a date for everyone to have a site visit to Meadow Road.
- Keep track of when the window for application opens
- Follow up with Cassandra on our requests
- Provide MaineDOT links for bridges & roads

Selectboard:

- Will sign a letter of intent (Cassandra will send the template), once the application window is open. This is to be received within the first month of the application window.
- Has already signed the 5 year mitigation plan. Along with this, a member of the Selectboard is responsible to attend local EMA meetings.

CS to do:

- Send a brochure outline of 404 vs 406 funding.
- Send a template for letter of intent for selectboard to sign
- Confirm if we need a bidding process for the first portion of the process, the scope work. We are hoping not and we would like to rely on C. Fournier of HEB for this.
- Confirm if public hearings are required for the scoping portion of the work.
- Present available dates for site review

- Provide a timeline of how the project will flow (eg confirm our process listed above).
 - Internal timeline of the application process
 - Timeline for the Project Scoping Application
 - Timeline for completing the rest of the work - to completion
- Confirm the process for submitting progress payments for reimbursement
- Confirm how and when our 10% share of the costs is calculated (per invoice? At the end of the project?)
- Confirm how to best track our time and effort as we progress - ie: what are the state requirements.
- We understand that our time is compensated at \$34/hr, and this in-kind portion of the project can count towards our 10% of the overall cost. Please confirm.
- How will the delay in the application window affect the Awad timeline and release of the funds?
- Look into whether the HMGP grants would be a good option for us, and why Heather Dumais steered us toward the BRIC grant.

Everyone

- Keep track of time and effort. Because of the income rate in our town, we will receive 90% reimbursement. We will be able to use the value of our time toward our portion of the 10% obligation (per Heather Dumais)

Other Engineering Firms

Pine Tree, Dirigo, Reed & Reed (all 2 hours away), White Mountain in Ossipee

Other Key Contacts:

Engineering contact: **Chris Fournier** <https://www.hebengineers.com/our-people/>

cfournier@hebengineers.com

Heather Dumais , Hazard Mitigation Officer with Maine Emergency Management Agency (leaving in Nov)

207-624-4466

Heather.dumais@maine.gov

Heather runs programs for Me towns to get road funding, RTF had their eligibility meeting with her

Christine Whelan, Contract/Grants Specialist with Maine Emergency Management Agency (will replace Heather, has experience)

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Anne Fuchs , Director of Mitigation and Recovery (Heathers's boss, we need her title)

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